

Health Promotion & Wellness

September/October 2020

September is Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Month

There are many organizations who focus upon psychological health and suicide prevention and have information, fact sheets and other resources. If you have not visited these websites recently, take a tour and consider using and sharing some of their materials with your command and in your local area.

Federal agencies that offer mental health materials

- [CDC Mental Health](#)
- [CDC Stress and Coping During the Pandemic](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [US Department of Veterans Affairs](#)

Military psychological health resources

- [DHA Mental Health Care](#) including a [Stress Assessment](#)
- [Military OneSource](#) including [non-medical counseling](#)
- [NMCPHC HPW Psychological and Emotional Well-Being](#) (if it asks you to sign in, hit "cancel")
- [Real Warriors](#)

Suicide prevention resources

- [DOD Suicide Prevention Office](#)
- [Navy Suicide Prevention Program](#)

For those in crisis or distress:

- The confidential 24/7 [Military Crisis Line](#), call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, [chat](#) or text 838255
- The Marine Corps [DSTRESS Line](#), call 1-877-476-7734 or [chat](#)

Blue H Update

2019: We are hoping this is signed soon. Award packages are ready to be mailed. Emails are ready to be sent. Webpage placeholder has been updated. Within minutes of receiving the signed announcement, it will be sent to the Blue H distribution list!

2020: The [webpage](#) has been updated and there is new information available. The Blue H instructions have been updated to better reflect the order of putting together a package. There are also Pandemic Changes that explain scoring changes to date. Plus, there is a new review form so commands who submit can review their package to be sure it is complete before it is sent in. All of these are designed to help you succeed with your 2020 package and make the whole process easier for everyone.



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October is Women's Health Month

Women who have been doing high intensity aerobic activity or who were active before becoming pregnant can continue and should do so even after having the baby. Providers tell their female patients to continue or start working out because it is one of the best things they can do for their health and the health of the child. Some exercises may need to be adapted though due to body changes and concerns for the baby.

Studies of pregnant women who work out show lower rates of gestational diabetes, less chance of needing surgery, and better recovery. Being active is also important to avoid depression after the baby arrives. Although service members are exempt from fitness standards during pregnancy and nine months after a birth, this doesn't mean they should stop, unless advised to do so by their provider.

Resources:

[Marine Corps Pregnancy and Postpartum Physical Training Guidebook](#)

[Army 12-Week Maternity Leave Guide](#)

[NOFFS Navy Fitness](#)

2020 DOD Active Duty Women's Reproductive Health Survey

The Defense Department (DoD) will initiate the Women's Reproductive Health Survey (WRHS), the first survey specifically focused on the reproductive health of female service members in over 30 years. The WRHS, which begins in August, provides information that can shape policy and clinical care in the area of women's health. The survey assesses behaviors and experiences that can affect military readiness and inform clinicians about women's gynecologic and obstetrical care needs. A select, random sample of women will be invited via email or post to participate in the survey.

Visit [Health.mil](https://health.mil) for more information such as eligibility and [frequently asked questions](#).

Open Athens

Are you looking for full journal articles, book chapters, library resources, clinical skills information or association publications? Not to mention free Continuing Education, live broadcasts, webinars and podcasts? Oh yes, PubMed, ClinicalKey, Natural Medicines and SO much more?

The Navy Medicine electronic Library (NMeL) Athens page has ALL of this! From their webpage: "Athens is a single sign-on portal that allows access to all of the library resources. Authorized Navy Medicine health professionals may register for an Athens account."

Go to <https://my.openathens.net> to start your own account and go explore.



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Use Social Support to Combat Burnout

From our Partners at Human Performance Resources by CHAMP (HPRC):

“Burnout” is the mental strain and emotional exhaustion that comes with chronic work stress. Military life has added risks with long deployments away from family, potential combat, added duties, and long work hours. The risk factors may be hard to avoid in military settings. Lately, burnout has been more common due to the worries, responsibilities and challenges of staying safe and socially distant during the pandemic.

Why does it matter if Sailors and Marines are burnt-out? It affects performance, wellness, and effectiveness. Burnout is linked with high turnover, extra health care costs, less innovation, and reduced competitive edge.

What does burnout look like?

- Emotional exhaustion or feeling there are no resources to cope with the stress going on.
- Checking out from work, coworkers, family and friends.
- Negativity, less connection and lower cooperation with teammates.
- Feeling a lack of accomplishment or not performing well.
- Less engagement and lower satisfaction with work.

What keeps the military team ready for action? A strong support network, positively engaged leadership and a focus on building healthy relationships both at home and at work.

Focus on cohesion and morale. Support from other Marines or Shipmates is key. The team will be more likely to divvy up work responsibilities, share information and ask for help when needed.

Work on leadership styles at all levels. Leaders should build a team environment that enables trust, support and cohesion. Build social skills to notice when burnout is occurring in others. Give regular feedback to the team to keep them positive, on track and motivated.

Build healthy relationships at home. Even if the stress starts at work, the drain on focus, feelings and positivity can spillover to personal relationships. The opposite is true as well. Personal support systems can help relieve stress for all involved when relationships are healthy. There are many resources to encourage building partnerships to help everyone with the challenging military life.

Look for it! Burnout usually happens over time, which means it can be tricky to spot—but possible to prevent. Keep an eye on team members for signs of extra stress. Notice if they seem to be having trouble managing their responsibilities. Reach out when frustrated, overloaded or struggling.

HPRC has facts to help members of the military community be physically and mentally fit, fuel and hydrate properly, maintain social ties and stay resilient—all pieces of the puzzle that make up Total Force Fitness. Visit us at hprc-online.org.



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Are Faux Meats a Healthier Option?

Faux meats have become much more prevalent in the past year, even though meat alternatives have been on the market for a long time (ever hear of tofurky? It's been around for decades). Many fast food restaurants are getting on board with this trend, offering faux beef burgers and fake sausage breakfast sandwiches. Faux fried chicken is on the way soon. The newer products more closely resemble the texture and taste of actual animal muscle tissue – some even “bleed” – but are they actually a healthier alternative?

A recent trip to the grocery store revealed a selection of mock meats in the refrigerated case, available for home use. According to the nutrition label, one brand of faux beef has 240 calories, 19 grams of protein and 8 grams of saturated fat per 4 oz serving. Using data from the [USDA](#), compare that to 4 oz of ground beef (280 calories, 19.8 grams of protein, 8.3 grams of saturated fat) and they look pretty similar. Production of faux meats claims to have a significantly less negative impact on the environment and no animals are killed to make them, so they might make sense if you want to reduce or eliminate your consumption of animal products for environmental or moral concerns.

However, processed foods, like mock meats, tend to include other ingredients and additives that we need to consider. For example, a diet heavy in processed foods usually has more added sodium than is considered healthful for most adults. The same brand of faux beef in the above comparison has 370 mg of sodium, compared to ground beef's 75 mg (or close to five times as much). The same product also has over 2000% of the recommended daily allowance of thiamin. Our bodies need some thiamin to survive and prolonged thiamin deficiency can cause very harmful effects to the cardiovascular, immune and nervous systems. We know what can happen with too little thiamin. What about too much? Thiamin overdose is rare and there is actually no established upper limit because of this. It is difficult to reach excess levels of thiamin by eating a whole foods/ minimally processed foods diet. It is much easier to reach extremely high levels once we eat more processed foods and/or use dietary supplements. More research and long-term studies are needed before we are truly aware of how excessive levels of food additives, like thiamin, can affect our overall health.

However, we know a lot about what is good for us now and that is the key thing to remember when planning meals. The populations around the world where people live longest and best (Blue Zones) eat diets full of whole fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains, with little to no meats included at most meals. Eating more fruits and vegetables is the single most important action you can take to improve your health. Most meat alternatives are heavily processed, so limit them to a small portion of your overall meal plan. Eat whole foods and minimize processed foods, while aiming to eat 5 – 10 servings of whole fruits and vegetables every day. If we have a goal to eat this many fruits and vegetables, we can easily make sure our diet is “plant-based” and includes plenty of nutrients in their natural form and little risk of overdosing on any one nutrient or additive.

September is National Fruits and Vegetables month, so celebrate by eating more of them!

For some tips how to get more fruits and vegetable into your daily life, click [here](#).



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Dietary Supplements: What You Need to Know

From our partners at Operation Supplement Safety and Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP):

Many service members use dietary supplements for health, performance, bodybuilding, weight loss and more. Some supplements can result in side effects that reduce rather than improve performance. In some cases supplements cause positive drug tests.

Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) is the military's go-to resource for all information about dietary supplements and other self-care products. OPSS has resources to help service members make informed decisions about dietary supplements. Check out some of our featured resources on [OPSS.org](https://www.opss.org).

Tips for Choosing Dietary Supplements

Without lab testing, there's no way to know the actual ingredients in a product. Check to see if it has a seal from an independent, third-party testing organization, such as BSCG Certified Drug Free, Informed-Sport, NSF Certified for Sport or USP Verified.

Use extra caution when choosing products for bodybuilding, weight loss or sexual enhancement, which are more likely than others to contain "hidden" ingredients not on the label.

Use the [OPSS scorecard](#) to help decide if your supplement is okay. If it scores less than "4," consider a different product.

Watch Out For These Ingredients

Stimulants: Stimulants can raise heart rate and blood pressure and otherwise affect your nervous system. Taking too much of one or more can increase your risk of unwanted side effects. Watch out for them in pre-workouts, energy drinks and weight loss supplements. Check out this [infographic](#) for common stimulants in dietary products.

Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators or SARMs: These synthetic drugs have effects similar to those of testosterone. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), SARMs are not approved for human use. SARMs are also on the [OPSS list of DoD-prohibited substances](#).

Hemp and CBD: Hemp and CBD are not allowed for use by service members. Please read the OPSS articles about [hemp](#) and [CBD](#) to learn more.

Have questions? Use the ["Ask the Expert"](#) feature on the OPSS home page.



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Microwave Veggie Frittata

Let's face it, many Sailors and Marines skip breakfast for those extra few minutes of needed sleep! This is a quick breakfast that will have you going in no time. Serve it with toast, roll it up in a tortilla for a great breakfast burrito on the go, and - please - play with your food! You can use so many other ingredients and make this truly your own. Serves 1.

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil or unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup fresh baby spinach or arugula leaves, Stemmed and chopped.
- 1/2 small plum tomato, seeded and diced
- 2-3 tablespoons firm cheese (cheddar, muenster, mozzarella, provolone, pepper jack, etc.)
- Salt and pepper to taste (optional)
- 2 eggs
- 4 tablespoons water, milk, half and half, or soy milk

Optional Ingredients: amounts as you desire

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| ham | jalapeno | onions |
| salsa | mushrooms | leftover steak |
| bell peppers | olives | sour cream |
| leftover rice | black beans | bacon |
| garlic | herbs | leftover chicken |
| capers | kimchi | yogurt |
| broccoli | alfalfa sprouts | avocado |
| cilantro | lime | salmon |
| quinoa | hummus | squash |
| parsley | (so much more, be brave!) | |

Rub the inside of a 6" microwave safe cereal bowl with the oil or butter. Do not forget this step or clean up will not be fun! Place the spinach, tomato and cheese in the bowl. Season as you like. Toss to combine.

In a different bowl, add eggs beat together with your liquid of choice. Pour over the veggies and cheese. DO NOT STIR.

Microwave on HIGH, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Let rest for 15-20 seconds. The frittata will puff up and drop as it cools. Serve immediately. Enjoy!

